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"THE BLESSED DEAD WAITING FOR US."

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

ST. JAMES' CHURCH,

MARIETTA, GEORGIA,

ON THE

FESTIVAL OF ALL SAINTS,

NOVEMBER 1st, 1863,

BY

REV. SAMUEL BENEDICT,

RECTOR OF THE PARISH.

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"IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME AGAIN AND RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF."

"THIS SAME JESUS WHICH IS TAKEN UP FROM YOU INTO HEAVEN, SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER AS YOU HAVE SEEN HIM GO INTO HEAVEN."

"FROM WHENCE ALSO WE LOOK FOR THE SAVIOUR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST."

"LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE."

"LOOKING FOR AND HASTING UNTO THE COMING OF THE DAY OF GOD."

"WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR WE SHALL BE MADE LIKE HIM."

"EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS."

A Sermon.

HEB. XI, 40 : "*that they without us shall not be made perfect.*"

To-day is All-Saints' day. We to-day commemorate all those who "having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors." That long line of faithful ones, of whom St. Paul, in the chapter of which the text is the conclusion, gives only a few note-worthy Scripture names, has been year by year, rapidly and steadily augmenting. It now includes many familiar to our minds and dear to our hearts. Towards that great "cloud of witnesses" all living saints are steadily advancing and rapidly passing. A few years and we, too, shall have been numbered with the dead. God grant to all of us, that then we may be reckoned among those, of whom a future generation may take up the strain of Apostolic rapture, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, *received not the promise*, God having provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect."

Yes, we can hope for no better condition after death, and, before the resurrection, than all the saints of all the former ages have enjoyed. They, in their triumphant, their blessed state, still wait for us. How near this thought brings all the departed good to us! not gone on to their eternal, their final reward, and, for the present separated from us in hope and sympathy; but, still with us in a state of expectancy, with us, waiting for a still brighter day, for a still more glorious fruition. Abraham and Moses, and Joseph and David, and all the saints of the world's earlier days have not yet received the promise! Why? "God having provided some better thing for us" *also*, (for that is what the verse plainly means: not that God has provided some better thing for us, than he did for them, but that God for us, *as for them*, has provided some better thing, than in this world is offered to

us, and, therefore, they do not receive it in advance of us;) "God having provided some better thing for us" *also*, "that they without us should not be made perfect." (a.)

In these words, is, we say, contained the doctrine of the intermediate state of the departed saints; a doctrine which comes naturally to our thoughts, when we dwell upon the memory of those who, once with us in the communion of the Church on earth, are still with us in the communion of Christ's body, although taken from our presence and our sight. One with us still! How? As the angels are? No, not so. In a closer, in a still nearer sense. Still related to us, by the ties of a mortal nature; still destined with us to

NOTES.—(a.) The advantages in this life conferred upon us do far exceed those granted to saints in the earlier ages. But there seems to be no such comparison intimated in these words, or hinted at in this chapter. Our faith needs *some better thing* in the future, to sustain us under earthly labors and sufferings, just as theirs did, v. v. 10, 13, 16, 27, 35. The systematic contrast between the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, seems to have passed out of St. Paul's mind at the middle of the tenth chapter. From that point, all the faithful, are, in his view, members of the one family of Abraham's spiritual seed, and heirs with him of the same promise, and bound to live, and labor, and suffer, and conquer through faith. And to this victory of faith it is necessary that *some better thing* should be held out to us, of which "faith is the evidence," some future reward "hoped for," of which faith is the present "substance." To adhere, in this verse, to the idea previously set forth of *some better thing* granted to us in this life than to the Jews was vouchsafed, complicates the interpretation, and confuses the sense.

The Presbyterian divine, Dr. McKnight, while needlessly laboring to incorporate both ideas in his paraphrase of this verse, yet uses the following words, "*God having foreseen that by the Gospel He would bestow some better means of faith on us in order to our becoming Abraham's spiritual seed, resolved that the ancients without us, should not be made perfect, by receiving the promised heavenly country. For He determined that the whole spiritual seed of Abraham, raised from the dead, shall be introduced into that country in a body at one and the same time; namely, after the general judgment.*" And in his annotations, he says more fully: "*Made perfect, here signifies made complete, by receiving the whole of the blessings promised to believers. * * * These blessings are the resurrection of the body, the everlasting possession of the heavenly country, and the full enjoyment of God as their exceeding great reward.*" The Apostle's doctrine, that believers are all to be rewarded together and at the same time, is agreeable to Christ's declaration, who told His disciples that they were not to come to the place He was going away to prepare for them, till He returned from heaven to carry them to it. St. Jo. xiv, 3. Further, that the righteous are not to be rewarded till the end of the world, is evident from Christ's words. St. Matth. xiii, 40, 43. In like manner St. Peter hath told us, that the righteous are to be *made glad* with their reward, at the *revelation of Christ*. 1 Pet. iv, 13. When they are to receive a *crown of glory that fadeth not away*. 1 Pet. v, 4. St. John also tells us, that *when He shall appear, we shall be made like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*. 1 Jo. iii, 2."

The following are a few of the many passages bearing on this truth. Let them be consulted in order: Dan. xii, 2, 3. St. Jo. v, 29. St. Lu. xiv, 14, xx, 36. Rom. viii, 23. 1 Cor. xv, 54. 2 Cor. iv, 14. 1 Thes. iv, 14-17. Heb. ix, 28. 1 Pet. i, 3-7. St. Matth. xiii, 43. St. Matth. xxv, 21, 34, 46. Col. iii, 4. Ps. xvii, 15. 1 Jo. iii, 2. 2 Tim. iv, 8.

the glad bursting of the resurrection morn; still to pass with us the ordeal of the judgment; still with us to hear the approval "well done" from the lips of our Judge; and still, with us, to be admitted for the first time, "to the kingdom prepared" for us and for them "from the foundation of the world." There is, we maintain, in this doctrine, a peculiarly sweet and animating reflection: the dead in Christ, our own loved ones gone before, still waiting for us, still delaying their entrance into their highest glory, till we with them can enter there.

We consider this doctrine as it is here so plainly stated, in a two-fold aspect;

1. In regard to the condition of the body.
2. In regard to the condition of the soul.

I. As to the body. Outside every city and town and hamlet where human beings live, there grows up rapidly and steadily, the more thickly populated city of the dead. In Christian lands, the dear lifeless forms are there disposed with care, in recognition of the fact, that, in this condition, a great and mighty transformation awaits them. Soon, very soon, the population in these silent streets, and these lonely tenements, far exceeds that of the busy town, with its bustling crowds, and its homes of gaiety and happiness. Every year the stream flows on from the busy to the silent city; from the homes of the living and the loving, to the cold, dark, unresponsive chambers of the tomb. Christian faith may teach us, that the state of the soul is vastly more important than the disposal made of the material form, and that he who has Christian faith will think only of the soul of his departed friend; that, in his view, the body will be only the deserted cell, the cast-off fetter, the forgotten aurelia of the released, the exultant spirit. So, in one sense, it does. But still, under Christian teachings, the resting-places of the bodies of departed friends, are places of special interest to the bereaved. There the heart naturally feels that the loved one is lying. Despite the voice divine that tells them "he is not here," the heart still clings to the form, lifeless and mouldering, though it be, beneath the stone. There is the father, the mother, the husband, the wife, the

child, the friend, that once I loved. "Here he lies" is the true, the appropriate epithet on Christian tombs.

And so he does. It is no mere concession to the dulness of the mental vision that we turn to the graves of our dead ones, with the yearning of loving hearts, and so tenderly guard their resting place. It is no mere yielding to the weakness of the flesh, that we enclose the precious dust and so carefully mark the spot where it is deposited. Here he does lie. Not only the earthly form now turning back to dust; but here lies the form that is to rise immortal, to stand with us at the judgment, to enter with us the golden gates. True Christian faith, sitting at the door of the sepulchre, thinks not only of the form that was carried lifeless and corruptible to its last earthly sleep; but also, of the body that shall wake in immortal energy and issue forth in glorious beauty. And so as the Christian tends carefully and visits lovingly the place where sleep the companions of the past, he feels that it is with the companions of the future, rather, that he is holding silent communion.

It is a mistake, into which even Christians fall, to speak of the immortality of the soul, as if the body, too, were not immortal. The immortality of the soul was a speculation of heathen philosophy, and rested on the supposed indestructibility of the spiritual part of man. The immortality of man, body and soul, is a doctrine of the Gospel, and rests on the revelation of God, and gathers its confirmation from the resurrection of the man Christ Jesus. Those Christians, who, in their conceptions of heavenly felicity, leave the body out of account, and make the disembodied spirit at once to mount up to the highest glory and enter upon its perfect reward, seem to me, to be rather believers in Plato than in Christ. For it surely is around the tomb, that His disciples are taught to anticipate that perfect day, when mortality shall put on immortality, when weakness shall gird itself with strength, when corruption shall be raised in incorruption, and when all the blessed children of the resurrection shall "inherit the kingdom prepared for" them "from the foundation of the world."

The fact then that the body is to be raised and made a par-

ticipator in the full, final reward, proves the doctrine of which I speak.

II. But while the flesh thus rests in hope, the spirit is in its proper place. Where that place is exactly, we care not to discuss. It is called Paradise in more than one passage; in one other, it is Abraham's bosom; and, in others, the invisible place, denominated in the Psalms, and in the Acts, hell—i. e. the covered place, because no human eye can penetrate its shades. In the old heathen mythology, this place of the dead was beneath the surface of the earth. There were bright elysian fields, the counterparts of the pleasantest spots of the upper world. In these the spirits of the good disported themselves as they had been wont to do in the happiest days of their earthly life. And that was all. The body was left forever. It was the soul, and the soul alone, in its disembodied state that occupied their contemplations of the condition of the departed.

Now the Scriptures, all in harmony, teach us this one consistent truth, that after death the body rests in the grave, and the spirit in its separate condition, is in the place of departed spirits, wherever it may be, but not in the state of perfect glory destined to it hereafter.

This place is called hell, as where in the Psalms, David says, "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." Of which confidence of David, St. Peter, in his Pentecostal address, asserts that it was of Christ's soul that David, as a Prophet, sung. He "spake of the resurrection of Christ, that *His* soul was not left in hell, neither *His* flesh did see corruption." This place, or at least one portion of this place of departed spirits is Paradise; for to the penitent thief our Lord promised "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." For its locality we do not contend. The word Paradise is a sweet word, and carries back our thoughts to Eden's garden of perfect and delightful beauty, where man talked face to face with God, and innocent and immortal, lacked nothing to his present enjoyment or his future expectation. The word strictly means a kind of park or pleasure ground, and is suggestive of peacefulness and repose. In our conception of

such an earthly paradise, there may be included the idea of a noble mansion, to which these lovely grounds belong. In such an earthly paradise, the invited guests who have already *arrived*, may wander at will, amid its cool shades and fragrant breezes, pleased with a thousand charms of sight and sound, happy in their present delightful repose, and in the expectation of the rich entertainment to which they have been called. In such a state of actual joy and of still more joyous hope, they wait till the time shall have fully come, till all the guests shall have arrived. Then the doors of the mansion are thrown open and all go in together and sit down at the banquet. So in the Paradise of God, (b) the blessed dead, full of present peace and of joyous hope wait for us. In such a happy state, and with such a blessed hope, a few years, or even a few centuries, are in comparison with the eternity before them, but a waiting moment. They wait in joy, and when the appointed time shall come, when the number of the elect shall be completed, then again, as once for Jesus, our ascending Lord, so now for those, who are made like unto Him, shall the everlasting gates lift up their festal heads, and all the saints together shall go in and sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

We hold this to be the one great central fact of all the glorious truths concerning the invisible world, and man's condition therein, at which Scripture gives us transporting glimpses, more or less distinct: i. e. Christ is the *Resurrection and the Life*. The Resurrection and *therefore* the Life. First, He raised Himself, and so became the Giver of Life. Through death He overcome death. By His raising His human body,

(b.) Does not this view satisfactorily explain such passages in Scripture as are quoted against the doctrine of the intermediate state? Such passages are Acts vii, 59. Phil. i, 23. 2 Cor. v, 6, 8, xii, 4. On this last passage, Dr. McKnight says: "Clement, of Alexandria, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and most of the ancients, except Origen, and among the moderns Bull, Whitby, Bengel, &c., were of opinion that the Apostle had two different raptures." The language of Bp. Bull is, "First he had represented to him the most perfect joys of the third or highest heaven, of which we hope to be partakers after the resurrection; and then, lest so long an expectation should discourage us, he saw also the intermediate joys of Paradise; and for our comfort tells us, that even these also are inexpressible." *Sermon III, on the middle state, &c.* Ols-hausen, while dissenting from the idea that St. Paul speaks of two visions, yet says, "The distinction between an upper and a lower paradise * * entirely corresponds with the Biblical doctrine."

and re-uniting it to the human soul, He burst the dominion of the king of terrors. Till His resurrection, He was not Himself delivered from the power of death and the captivity of the grave. But when on the third day He came forth, the conqueror of death and hell, then the triumphant exultation began to be shouted, "Oh, Death! where is thy sting? Oh, Grave! where is thy victory?" Not till He had overcome death, and wrested from him everything that he had subdued to his power, do the Scriptures exhibit Christ as the Life giver. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Or, as St. Paul, who so plainly points to the bodily life, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins."

And on this truth depends another. Till the moment of His victory, Christ was in His state of humiliation. For three days His body was held as the trophy of death, thus far the victor even over the Life-giver himself. Thus far, He was Himself the Captive. And can we imagine, that the Paradise, to which His soul went, was the state of triumph and the place where the conqueror of Death was received with all the glory of the Victor over death and hell? No! not till He led captivity captive, not till death's dominion had been completely shaken off, not till all immortal, body and soul, Jesus had overcome death, and reclaimed from him all His human nature, did the city of our God, resound with the hosannahs of triumph, and the challenged gates lift up their heads, and the everlasting doors give way, to let the King of Glory, the conquering Jesus in.

And then, is the disciple above his Master? Shall the servant, at once, after death, enter the full triumph of the redeemed, while his body is in the place of corruption, when so did not the Lord himself? No! Certainly in this respect "it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord." And in harmony with this view Scripture teaches that our bodies shall in the tomb await a glorious resurrection; that they are to be made like unto His glorious body; that our flesh shall rest in hope of the time when Christ shall come again, and, in the form of the Son of Man, shall call forth from their graves all His sleeping saints; that then before His bar the gathered nations shall be judged; and

that then to His saints, in their restored human nature, body and soul reunited, He shall address the welcome, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom." Then shall come the blissful reception into the palace of the King of Kings. Then shall the righteous enter "life eternal." Then bearing the image of Him who reigns in glory, shall they in His likeness be perfectly glorified with Him.

And we do maintain, that it is a false and marring view of this great and symmetrical truth, to make the soul of the departed saint, immediately after death, enter upon the perfect and final glory. (c.) Such a conception of the state of the departed, reduces the body to a useless appendage to the redeemed and glorified man, and not a part of the man himself; such a conception sinks the resurrection of the body to a useless display of Almighty power, not longed for by the saint, because not needed, in order to his further advancement in glory. Such a conception makes the judgment but the idle re-enacting of a long finished drama, and the sentence of that day but the re-iteration of a welcome already extended and already accepted. No! Not so. Think of our departed friends as we may—as happy as we may fondly believe them to be—at rest from all earthly labors, and that is much—free from sin and temptation, and that is more—secure in their title to their eternal inheritance, and that is the great thing—in Paradise, the celestial ante-type of Eden's perfections of beauty and of peace—in Abraham's bosom, and so in the sweet companionship of all the saints—present with the Lord, because absent from the body, and

(c.) "Now I do affirm the constant and consentient doctrine of the primitive church to be this: that the souls of all the faithful, immediately after death, enter into a place and state of bliss, far exceeding all the felicities of this world, though short of that most consummate perfect beatitude of the kingdom of heaven, with which they are to be crowned and rewarded in the resurrection." *Bp. Bull, Sermon III.*

"It was the Popish Convention, at Florence, that first boldly defined against the sense of the Primitive Christians. That those souls which, having contracted the blemish of sin, are, either in their bodies or out of them, purged from it, do presently go into heaven, and there clearly behold God Himself; one God in three persons, as He is. And this decree they made, partly to establish their superstition of *praying to the saints* deceased; * * * *but chiefly to introduce their purgatory.*" *Ibid.*

Dr. Whitby says: "And the Trent Council, sess. 25, hath laid this as the foundation of the invocation of saints departed, that they do now reign with Christ, and enjoy eternal felicity in heaven." Annotations on 2 Tim. iv, 8.

hence with him in a closer union than to us here is possible—in heaven, perhaps, if by heaven you simply mean some happy place, away from this stricken, groaning world, and nearer to the glory of God's immediate presence, where sin and sorrow never enter—think of them, I say, as we fondly may; but oh! let us not forget that a higher state, a more glorious destiny, a fuller fruition yet awaits them, which shall not be by them enjoyed till we, too, if we are so happy, till we, too, are ready, till all the sons of immortality are ready and Christ comes again. Then, side by side, we who have taken sweet counsel together, and gone to the house of God in company, shall be glorified together—together receive our reward—together go in at the heavenly mansion and sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Oh! this waiting for us of the blessed dead! How closely it still knits them to us! Waiting for us! All of the same company still. Waiting for us! Not to welcome us to their perfect state. That is but half the truth. But waiting for us, with us to be advanced and crowned. Half the truth, did I say! It is but the merest fraction of the truth. Glorious and happy as we may conceive our departed loved ones now to be, and happy as we may be when, in their paradise, we enjoy their present joy, it will still be but the beginning of an endless advance, the first step, although a lofty one, in a succession of upward mountings into light and life; the first enlargings of a free spirit, that is more and more, and forever more and more, to be filled with all the fullness of God. Our departed friends, just across the dark river, in those bright fields which

“—beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green,”

wait for us, to enter with us, as conquerors, into the Heavenly City. And then all immortal, body and soul, we in one triumphal throng, with Jesus at our head, shall pass on to the heavenly Zion, receive our crowns, and reign with Him forever and ever.

At the old Grecian games, the victors in the amphitheatre were removed from the arena to that part of the stadium,

where the judges sat, and where the prizes had been displayed. Not at once were the crowns put upon their brow. The contests in the amphitheatre were still going on. One by one the victors passed out of the place of conflict and entered the place of honor and repose. Was anything then wanting to their satisfaction? Their breasts swelled with exultation. They occupied the place of honor—the admired recipients of a nation's envy and applause. Yet for a while they waited. Then when the games were ended, (d) the judge pronounced the names of the victors in all the games. Then the pæans burst forth; then the crowns descended; then the palms were grasped, and the conquerors went forth to banquet and song amid the ringing plaudits of the rejoicing city.

So in our Christian course, which the Apostle likens to these contests of ancient Greece. A long line of the conquerors through faith have passed out of the arena of earthly strife to the presence of their Judge—to the post of security—to the place of honor, of happiness and of repose. Still they have not yet received the promise. The games of life are still progressing. Other victors are to be added to this faithful throng. Other crowns are to be won. Then when all this earthly probation is closed, the Judge shall arise, the victors shall be proclaimed, the crowns awarded, the harps struck, the song awakened and the triumphal procession of the redeemed shall take up its march to the uplifted gates; and the marriage of Christ and his spotless, perfect Church, shall cause the golden streets of the New Jerusalem to resound with the welcome acclaim.

The Church of Christ, then, is to be considered in a three-fold aspect. Here on earth, it is the Church Militant, where the struggle is still going on, where the victories are to be gained, if gained at all, and the prize of everlasting life secured, if secured at all. Then beyond the resurrection of

(d.) So testify Theodoret and Theophylact. Dr. McKnight, however, on what authority I do not find, says that all the victors of the day were together, at the close of each day, proclaimed and crowned. The difference is unimportant. When all the contests of this earthly life are over, or what is the same thing, when the day of probation comes to an end, then shall the crowns of immortality be awarded.

the dead and the eternal awards of the Judgment, is the Church Triumphant, where the victorious saints enjoy their triumph together, the proclaimed, the received inheritors of the kingdom and the crown. Between each one's death and resurrection, there is the Church in another state, properly called the Church Expectant, where, the contest finished, the prize secured, the successful, happy champions of faith, in present honor and delight, delay their entrance into the still higher glory, till we whom they love, and for whom they wait, shall have finished our course with joy, and are ready with them, in body and soul, to "have *our* perfect consummation and bliss." For "they, without us, should not be made perfect." Oh! what an incentive here, to strenuous, unintermitted labor in the Christian course. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Christian champion, have you among this cloud of witnesses, a departed parent or child, husband or wife, brother, sister or friend, in whose communion on earth you delighted? He waits for you there. Great as his present joy may be, he waits for you to enter upon a higher state of glory and felicity. Shall he wait in vain?

In this Church Expectant are many, who have recently, very recently completed their course on earth. There are many now there, who but lately drew near to *this* altar, and participated in *this* feast of love. Within the five years that I have ministered to you, in this part of the Church Militant, six of the forty-six communicants whom I found here, have been laid by me in the grave.(e.) Their spirits, we trust, are in that blissful, waiting throng, waiting for us, who are here

(e.) In the order of their decease these are Jeremiah B. Elmer, a Vestryman of the Parish, J. Mongin Smith, Junior Warden, Mrs. Eliza McDonald, Mrs. Barbara Pulliam, Mrs. Mary W. Berry, Benjamin Green, Junior Warden.

Of the forty-six communicants on the Register five years since, fifteen have removed, leaving only twenty-five of that number at this time on our communion list. Forty-four have been added by removal, sixty-seven anew, make the sum total of communicants in these five years, one hundred and fifty-seven. Of these additions two have died, and twenty-four removed, leaving our present number one hundred and ten, as given below. In this are reckoned a very few who on this (All Saints) day received their first communion. None are included in this number however, who, resident it may be for a longer or shorter time, have yet parish relations elsewhere in the Confederacy.

to-day, mutely but eloquently calling to their beloved ones, to join them in their coming day of triumph.

In this view of the relation between the Church Militant on earth, the Church Expectant in Paradise, and the Church Triumphant beyond, the history of each Christian Parish, becomes deeply interesting, and its Register extremely suggestive. During the five years just closed, there have, in this parish, been admitted to the Christian Church, by baptism, seventy-eight children, and twenty-eight adults. In the view, upon which, this morning, we have been dwelling, these are one hundred and six members of Christ, children of God, inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. It would be a blessed thought, that all of them shall ever thus remain; that their names shall never be blotted out of that book of life, which will at the last great day be opened.

Within these years seventy-six of God's baptized children have here renewed their baptismal promises and avowed themselves the soldiers and servants of Christ, and have set out in the Christian course, to win the prize of their high calling. Here are seventy-six enlisted competitors for the crown. How inexpressibly delightful it would be to the pastor's heart, to believe that each admitted competitor, would so run as to obtain.

Twenty-one times have I joined in Holy Matrimony those over whom I have uttered the prayer of benediction, "May you so dwell together in this life, that in the world to come, ye may have life everlasting." Would that in every case, we could feel, that Christ and His Church were so present in this earthly union, that, with assurance, we could anticipate for every one a more glorious espousal, and a never-ending re-union.

Forty-three times have the words been said over the open grave, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Many of these, we are sure, are now sleeping in Jesus, their flesh resting in hope, their spirits joyously in Paradise awaiting the day when corruption shall put on incorruption, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Oh! that no sad foreboding of a resurrection unto shame and everlasting con-

tempt, mingled with our anticipations of that glorious day

Over and over again, as we are to-day, soon to do, have we gathered around this table of our Lord. One after another has disappeared from our number, to join the greater communion beyond the veil. Others have come in to fill their places, till now where forty-six stood, five years ago, now one hundred and ten are registered as the communicants of this Parish. Month by month the sacrament of this communion has been renewed. Your pastor's heart is animated with the confidence that many here are going on from strength to strength—till they appear before God in Zion; that they are growing more and more meet for the blessed supper above, where none but the tried and the purified shall be admitted. While on the other hand, his heart is saddened with the reflection, that many seem to care little for their privileges, and try little for their glorious crown; and over some such, even among his communicants, the sigh will arise, that the records of the Church Militant, will not, perhaps be ratified by the records of the Book of Life. The sad thought will intrude, "that many" even here, are to be found, who, at the last, "shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Oh! these records of the Church of Christ! How they speak of privileges and of responsibilities, of hopes and promises, of God's mercies and of man's accountabilities, of present grace improved or neglected, and of future glory or despair! Let us ever, my brethren, remember that other book of God's account, and strive so to keep our place in His family that from the Church Militant on earth, we may pass to the blessed company of the faithful dead, who, in the Church Expectant, wait, in sure and certain hope, for their perfect consummation and bliss in the Church Triumphant, in the immediate presence of Christ, our risen and glorified Lord.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, come—and let him that is athirst come." Do not these sweet words of invitation from the Bride of Christ, this gentle persuasion of the Holy Spirit, come to you to-day, with a strange new power and tenderness—blended as they are, with the voices of the fondly remembered, the loved, the sainted dead? Can you not hear

them say, "Come, for all things are now ready." "Yet there is room." Room at this table of our Lord, room in our expectant ranks—room at that feast above, to which, we wait, with you to enter.

And now to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, our risen and glorified Lord, be ascribed, with the Father and Holy Ghost, as by the angels in Heaven and the saints in Paradise, so by the Church on earth, all the honor and the praise, forever and forever. Amen.

ALMIGHTY GOD, WITH WHOM DO LIVE THE SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO DEPART HENCE IN THE LORD, AND WITH WHOM THE SOULS OF THE FAITHFUL, AFTER THEY ARE DELIVERED FROM THE BURDEN OF THE FLESH ARE IN JOY AND FELICITY: WE GIVE THEE HEARTY THANKS FOR THE GOOD EXAMPLES OF ALL THOSE THY SERVANTS, WHO, HAVING FINISHED THEIR COURSE IN FAITH, DO NOW REST FROM THEIR LABORS. AND WE BESEECH THEE, THAT WE, WITH ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DEPARTED IN THE TRUE FAITH OF THY HOLY NAME, MAY HAVE OUR PERFECT CONSUMMATION AND BLISS, BOTH IN BODY AND SOUL, IN THY ETERNAL AND EVERLASTING GLORY, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.

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